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# COLPORTAGE IN CANADA.

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## AN ADDRESS

OF THE

## COMMITTEE

OF THE

# Upper Canada Tract Society.

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TO WHICH IS ADDED,

## A REPORT

OF

## CONVENTION OF COLPORTEURS,

HELD IN

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER, 1854.

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1854.



## ADDRESS.

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### I.—*Our Providential Position.*

For twenty-two years the “Upper Canada Tract Society” has been pursuing its noiseless course of usefulness, and there are many pleasing evidences that its labors have not been in vain. It has scattered much sound religious truth in the publications of the London and American Tract Societies, and has aided materially in the circulation of the Scriptures. It has been prospered fully in proportion to the means employed, and efforts made in its behalf, thereby implanting a desire in the hearts of its officers and members to *increase* its means of usefulness.

In the mean time the *system of Colportage* was adopted and extensively prosecuted by the “American Tract Society.” From a small beginning, in 1841, it had a rapid developement, being found well suited to the wants of the newer parts of the country, to which the effort was mainly directed at first, and afterwards as well adapted and applied to the whole country. So great is the confidence now secured for this mode of Christian effort, and so general is the co-operation from all the evangelical denominations in the United States, that the number of colporteurs employed in a single year has been as high as 643. East, west, north, and south, this simple agency finds ready access. It is a favorite instrumentality, because it has been eminently owned of God. Stripped of all denominational objection, the laborer goes forth to *win souls to Christ*, and is enabled to commend the Savior of men in the cabin and in the mansion, on the mountains and in the valleys—everywhere, among the ignorant and neglected and careless, he is enabled to commend Christ and plead with sinners with all the eloquence and fervor of the men who wrote the precious

books and tracts he carries to their doors. He goes to carry the Gospel to the poor, to converse and pray with the people and point them to Christ. He is furnished with a large variety of the best works of the best men who have labored for souls, and left their earnest writings for the good of generations following, and is expected to leave a portion of God's Word, sufficient to shew the way of salvation, adapted to the cases he meets in every house.

The Upper Canada Tract Society, anxious to secure the benefits of this agency, was induced to undertake the work of Colportage in a limited degree, and had for some time endeavored to sustain two or three colporteurs, but for want of proper means for prosecuting the enterprise the results were not sufficient to awaken much interest. Sister societies at Kingston and Montreal had done something also, but the *great want* of the country in this most interesting and useful department of labor *was not met*. It seemed difficult to get either men or means for the work.

In 1853, the American Tract Society in its noble efforts to extend the colporteur work over the whole country, and to give a thorough system to all its operations, established a Branch at Rochester, with a General Agent and Superintendent of Colportage for Western N. Y. and Canada. This close relation to Canada soon brought the Superintendent into correspondence with this and other societies in the Province, and soon resulted in securing to us, all the advantages at Rochester which could be enjoyed in direct communication with the Society in N. Y. Men were soon found in considerable numbers desiring to engage in this self-denying work, and during the first year 22 were employed in connection with the Rochester agency on territory not occupied by others.

This benevolent labor was performed wholly at the expense of the American Tract Society, primarily for the direct good to be effected, and secondarily to illustrate the feasibility, the efficiency and necessity of Colportage in Canada. Part of this number were students who labored for brief periods. The whole time of service was 79 months. Their sales of books were \$4,737.86. Their grants to the destitute amounted to \$629.90. Number of prayer-meetings held and public meetings addressed, 367. Number of fa-

milies destitute of all religious books except the Bible, 678. Romanist families visited, 1,052. Number of families who habitually neglect evangelical preaching, 1,393. Families conversed with on personal religion or prayed with, 7,166. Whole number of families visited, 15,395. (See "First Annual Report of the Rochester Agency" for extracts from Reports of Colporteurs, illustrative of the field and the work). Interest was awakened, more or less in most parts of the country, and many were expressing the desire for the extension of this work to all parts of Canada. The colporteurs were pleading for larger forces to explore the back settlements, and supply all classes with the precious works which found such ready sale, and which were spreading blessings wherever circulated.

At Hamilton a noble effort was made, and the "Hamilton City Religious Tract and Missionary Society" was formed; its objects being the permanent establishment of a Bible and Tract Depository, with ample capacity to supply all demands made upon it, and the employment of a City Missionary who should co-operate with the Depositary. The prospects of usefulness for this Society are encouraging, as the various denominations of Christians united cordially in its organization; and while we hail our brethren with joy and pray for their success in the good work thus begun, we hope to enjoy their warm co-operation in the work of extending Colportage, and if practicable, to receive the benefits of an auxiliary relation *from this and the various local Societies in Canada West*. This we desire for the sake of efficiency, and for the greatest mutual and general good.

The increased interest felt by some in Toronto, led to the adoption at the annual meeting of the U. C. Tract Society, held June 6, 1854, of the following resolution:

"Resolved, That this meeting, recognizing the great benefits that result from the employment of Colporteurs, recommends the further extension of the Society's operations by this instrumentality, and if practicable the establishment of a General Agency."

The Committee met on the following evening to deliberate relative to the subject of this resolution, and looking at the success of Colportage as employed by the American

Tract Society in this Province ; looking at the wants of our population as revealed in part by Colporteur labor, showing great destitution of religious knowledge in our country, the prevalence of Romanism, and other erroneous systems of religion, the great indifference to education and spiritual religion among nominal Protestants, and the wide-spread diffusion of a *corrupt* and *destructive* literature ; and seeing that *the progress of our country is much more rapid than the increase of means for Evangelizing it*, they felt *called upon by Providence* to go forward, and employ a General Agent and Superintendent of Colportage, who should solicit donations, awaken interest by disseminating information, and under advice of the Committee direct the labors of Colporteurs, and attend to the general interests of the Society.

They saw that Providence had prepared to their hand, all the needful facilities for prosecuting the work of Colportage, and other departments of Tract operations. The numerous and exceedingly valuable publications of the London Society, embracing a great variety of works for all ages and conditions, and those of the American Tract Society, many of them reprints of the London Society's works, published and circulated *with the sole object of increasing vital piety*, could be purchased at rates much lower than those at which they could be produced with our present advantages for publishing ; and all the *experience* of other societies similarly engaged, was available for our benefit in prosecuting the work here.

The Committee, finding that suitable men could be obtained to carry forward the enterprise, felt constrained *gratefully to recognize* the hand of Providence in making this provision. There was nothing wanting but pecuniary means, and with all the plain indications of Providence that *the time had come for more decided and energetic action*, the Committee thought it would be unjust to their brethren not to place the interesting facts before them. This is a kind of effort that makes its appeal directly to every well disposed man's heart, in and out of the church. *It is for our country.* It is for education, for social advancement, as well as for morals and religion. It has in the United States won the confidence, respect and patronage of intelligent men in all positions, and has come to be regarded as *an*

*indispensable* agency. Its application in Canada is found on comparison to be equally if not more imperative, and we are happy to state that its success so far as it *has been* applied is at least equally encouraging. Shall the growth of our country be a healthful one, or shall its very prosperity prove its ruin? Shall we provide the necessary means of securing for our own, and our rapidly increasing emigrant population, a high standard of intelligence and morals, and a knowledge of the way of salvation, or shall we leave them with such partial supplies, or in such utter destitution, that the *reproach of their certain degradation without such means* shall rest upon us? These are practical and solemn questions which *every one will help to decide*, either by action such as is needed, or by *inaction and its consequences*.

An effort was commenced in Toronto September 1, 1854, to awaken interest and secure funds to enable this Society to enlarge its operations so as to meet the wants of the Province, believing that if Toronto, as the head-quarters of the enterprise, should make a liberal beginning, the rest of the Province would cheerfully co-operate with us, and so secure the greatest simplicity, economy and efficiency in its management. The Committee feel that a single agency at this central point can manage the whole work with more efficiency, and economy and with greater satisfaction to all, than by any division of the Province, as it is proposed to give to all Depositories and Branch Societies every possible advantage; every advantage which we enjoy in the prosecution of their work, selling to them for cash at the same prices we pay, adding transportation and exchange.

A liberal beginning having been made, the Committee thanked God and took courage, and now send forth their salutations to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and to all who value the blessings of Christianity, and cordially invite you to aid us, and to share with us the benefits of steadily carrying forward the good work with which God has entrusted us and you, praying that we may all *experience* the truth of our Lord's assurance, when he said to all "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*"

## II. *The Population of Canada.*

Of Canada East we would only say, that its population

being in the main different from Canada West, in language and in other important respects, we hope that the Society at Montreal will carry forward the work on its field of labor, and be favored with the aid and co-operation of local organization, making that city the centre, and that we may mutually enjoy each others' co-operation and warm sympathy. Our brethren of the evangelical churches in Canada East may, we believe, as they have already done to some extent, employ Colportage with great efficiency and success, in the great and responsible work before them. The great variety of excellent publications issued by the Tract Societies in the French language are available and no doubt may be employed in connection with the Scriptures with blessed results.

Canada West also requires but a few words to call the attention of its more intelligent inhabitants to its wants. What may be properly termed an *immigrant population* is rapidly increasing among us. Our public works and various other causes are attracting to our country vast numbers who are only accessible by such an agency as Colportage, and we are laid under responsibility by their presence. We *owe it to ourselves*, and to this and other destitute classes to provide for them the best means of improvement, and *all the means in our power*. Almost all the people, except those in Glengary, and other settlements, who speak the Gaelic, and some 40,000 Germans, settled mostly in counties west of Toronto, are of *one language*, and for the Germans 3 German colporteurs, provided with some 70 standard volumes, 170 tracts, 17 childrens' tracts, the Christian Almanac, and the "American Messenger," all in the German language, are employed at present by the American Tract Society. Though the language of our population be one, the elements are many, the character various; and while oneness of language renders this work more easy and hopeful, it in no wise lessens our responsibility.

Very few, comparatively, live where they cannot more or less frequently hear preaching, but in very many places the *occasional sermon* is all the people enjoy in the way of religious instruction, while the *facts* show that multitudes who might hear the Gospel do not. Many have gone from densely populated districts in the mother country to remote and scarcely settled places in Canada, and they conse-

quently and their children, have become *careless* in relation to Education and Religion. In such cases each generation grows worse. They are without pastoral visitation, their stock of religious reading, if they have any, is small, books become old and unreadable, the people become wholly engrossed in the world and forget that their souls are immortal and that their state will soon be unalterably fixed.

Infidelity is often most insidious and destructive in its milder forms of indifference and neglect of Religion and supreme attachment to the world, and in this way many in destitute districts who have gone forth from the warm embrace of home relations and the blessings and restraints of the Gospel, become wholly reckless. The god of this world gains the control, and many can truly say "*Our dear relatives and friends* present in their circumstances strong claims upon those who are in more favored situations." We are taught in the Bible who *is our brother*, and we are warned against indignantly, or even carelessly enquiring "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Our country is prosperous. Our people are many of them amassing wealth. The rush is after the world and away from God. As yet but little is done by us for benevolent objects. Our Christianity needs a large infusion of the *benevolent element*, and the way is now opening by which we may greatly benefit ourselves and secure more of the ability and the *heart* to do good to others.

With their *two millions* of people the Canadas have a *great work to do at home*, and if *faithful to themselves* they may do much *for others*, through benevolent agencies abroad, embracing as they do within themselves the elements of self-culture, socially, intellectually, and spiritually. Let there be a drawing out of these forces! Canada presents a picture of *want* and of *hope*. Let us attend promptly to her wants and our hopes shall not be disappointed.

### *III. The Population and Literature of Canada.*

In the Province assuredly there are valuable public and private Libraries, many religious books in families, some good periodicals; and a good beginning has been made to cherish a healthful Literature by Common School Libraries. In all this we rejoice. But it is a fact ascertained by care-

ful observations, to which we wish to call particular attention, that there is scarcely any other country of the same extent so thoroughly deluged with a fictitious, infidel, corrupting and mind-and-soul-destroying Literature. The infidel, corrupt and licentious Press has poured forth through its multifarious agencies a vast amount of its issues over our land. It has been common to speak of books which men read, as their companions ; and it is as just to infer the character of men from their reading as from their associates. Men will be like their books. It is, therefore, by no means uninteresting for the Philanthropist to inquire.

*“What will be the reading of our posterity and countrymen ten years hence?”* If it is pure, healthful, and fraught with wisdom, the generation will be exalted in holiness ; if it be frivolous, false, corrupting, or godless, the generation will be perverse and abandoned. Such is its mighty influence on Society.” This mischief-maker, this destroyer of mental energy, and of the souls of men, is abroad in the land doing its work of death. “The Press teems with it. The mails groan, and agents cover the country with fiction and trash. Daily, weekly and monthly periodicals are filled with matter not only worthless, but often positively demoralizing,” and this miserable confection is conveyed to the remotest villages of the land. The educated man, and the man of leisure, the intelligent traveller who desires a book for pastime, may read the more respectable of these without the moral contagion and mental enervation being so apparent ; and if this were the extent of the evil it might be borne, while it was lamented that the choice should not always fall on profitable reading, enough of which can be had full of interest. But this renders *the thing respectable* in the eyes of many who think a thing needs only to be respectable and popular to be good and useful. A young man in the city has access to good and bad books and so has the young woman, and with the advantage of much else to interest and profit the evils resulting from bad books are known to be dreadful. The highest crimes in both sexes and in all relations and grades of society are directly traceable to their cause. A young man of highly respectable family is hung at the yard-arm on the charge of mutiny. His *practical education* was from such works as “The

Pirate's own Book." A beloved daughter is seduced, and the offender murdered, and all is traceable, by the worse than bereaved, but too indulgent father, to the works of popular, but demoralising authors in France, England, and America. Still more dreadful is the result in the country where counteracting influences are fewer, and habits less varied. A young man of good character and firm standing is discovered to have murdered his fellow, or to have committed some gross outrage. A young woman of unsullied reputation has descended to the circle of infamy—and the people wonder. But we seriously ask if the wide circulation in country places of such reading, grasped at, because cheap, devoured with avidity because exciting, made the topic of conversation in the social circle, or left to corrode the mind and soul in solitude, pre-occupying the mind to the exclusion of wholesome instruction and incentives to valuable thought, and familiarizing it with everything frivolous, false and criminal,—we ask if here the wonderer is not distinctly told where the mystery of iniquity has one of its strongest holds? The amount of the issues of works of this kind, coming in from foreign parts and the States, is as incalculable as the mischief wrought by their indiscriminate and almost universal perusal is deplorable. The poison is at work, the *taste* for it is *increasing*, and how terrible a picture is presented to the Christian of Canada, when we think of this blighting influence upon our people—upon children—youth—all ages! What shall be done? *What SHALL be done?* To do nothing is to say that we approve, that we encourage this state of things.

#### *IV. The Characteristics of Colportage.*

Colportage, in its general application, is characterized by many excellencies which our limits will not allow us fully to illustrate. Its application to the fullest extent in Canada is regarded by those most familiar with its working here and elsewhere, as not only practicable, but absolutely indispensable as a means of Evangelization for our country. Its adaptation to our wants—wants which none but those who carefully examine the matter in the light of reliable statistics are willing to admit—is found on trial to be very marked, as may be inferred from what has been

said, in connection with the following brief summary. It aims :—

1.—To employ intelligent and devotedly pious laymen, or Ministers who are disabled from regular preaching service, in the judicious and widest possible circulation of such sound Religious Publications, Tracts, Books, and Periodicals, as the Committee, made up from different denominations, may approve, and thus :

2.—*It meets and counteracts* the vicious books and periodicals, prints and paper, which flood the land. Too much importance cannot be attached to this agency for this single fact. It is a powerful and almost sure *preventative* when it is applied in time. The child, or youth, or adult, who has been taught in the Word, and has had free access to the cheap, beautiful, attractive and instructive issues of the Tract Press, is provided with one of the most powerful safeguards against the seductive arts of the corrupters of mankind. It is also a powerful *antidote* to the moral poison. Many are the cases reported of those reclaimed from a downward course by the reading of such books and tracts as have taught them their danger and the way of escape. Many are the hearts lifted daily in gratitude to God for the returning again of some “lost” son or daughter, companion, relative or friend who has been “found” by this means.

3.—Its whole spirit is that of respect for the Ministry as God’s appointed teacher of his Holy Religion, whose hands it aims to uphold and with whom it aims to co-operate in the departments of personal Christian effort *from house to house*; in establishing, encouraging and sustaining Sabbath Schools in destitute neighborhoods, and exciting a desire for education in all its departments; in promoting the distribution of thoroughly evangelical works, and such as bear directly on Sabbath observance, the Bible cause, Home and Foreign Missions, Temperance, practical benevolence, and the general good of all; in securing the attendance at Church of those accustomed to neglect the Sanctuary, and where there is no Ministry endeavoring to carry the means of grace to the destitute and neglected, who are themselves careless, and who may justly say, “No man careth for my soul.”

4.—It aims to circulate the Bible, and co-operate with Bible Societies for this purpose. There it will be found a helpmate to the “Upper Canada Bible Society,” whose Committee have entered into an arrangement to supply Colporteurs with the Scriptures, and thus *ensure* their circulation among all classes, and in all places.

5.—It interests professing Christians in personal active labors for souls, and offers them the means of greatly augmenting their own usefulness by employing the Press. It tends to awaken general interest in spiritual Religion, stimulating to Christian faithfulness and *parental fidelity*, and places in the hands of many destitute parents the only means they enjoy for the Religious instruction of their children.

6.—It illustrates *Christian Union*, as it is seen in almost no other country—“not a barren, constrained, abstract union; but a free, fruitful, practical union in council, prayer and effort in the simple, sublime and Christ-like work of saving souls.”

7.—By its kind and catholic spirit it has been largely instrumental in counteracting Romanism and other forms of error, and leading souls, long deluded, to Christ the Savior. Wherever efforts have been successful for the conversion of errorists, whether in the time of the great Reformation, or at the present day on the continent, *Colporteurs with Books and Tracts have constituted a prominent agency*. So it must be here. These men should speak the language of the people they approach, whether French, German or English, and go to the people *at their homes*, commending to them the love of Christ and the completeness of his salvation: Colporteurs on their respective fields are expected to approach the families of errorists in this way.

8.—It secures a knowledge of the wants of destitute districts which could not be sought out and supplied so well by any other means. It *undeceives* many who think the people well supplied with the means of grace, by *carefully looking out and showing their destitution*; and is thus a source of national safety, by revealing the real state of Society, and enabling those disposed to apply remedies for existing evils to make a wise application, while it secures direct effort in behalf of the perishing, both individuals and families.

9.—Finally it supplies a link between the minister and his congregation and the remotest back-woodsman, which renders this agency *indispensable*, if the whole mass of our people are to be reached and blessed by the Gospel of Christ.

It seeks to carry the Gospel to all and to place in every family, and so far as possible in the hands of every individual, by sale or gift, sufficient printed truth to show the way of salvation. Colportage is an *earnest* work—a work of self-denial and there must be *simplicity* of aim and of *faith*, and its simplicity and adaptation are such that no one who will look at it candidly for an hour need be in doubt relative to its feasibility, efficiency or necessity.

*V. The Publications which this Society aims to circulate from its Depository, at Nos. 65 and 67 Yonge Street, Toronto, by its Colporteurs and Agents, and by all available channels of distribution.*

It is said of a certain eminent Divine that “His sermons are the *Bible in solution*.” Publications of the various Tract and Sunday School Societies, bearing such a character as deserves this description, are those which, in connection with the Bible, this Society aims to circulate as widely as possible, it being distinctly understood that no works of private or sectarian interest can be sanctioned by the Committee, but only such as meet the approval of the different denominations of Evangelical Christians represented in this Society, and generally only such as are published by the great leading Societies in Europe and America, whose publications are selected with the greatest care, and from which this Committee make their selections.

It is, therefore, quite sufficient to say that it will, in the judgment of this Committee, be entirely safe for parents, guardians or teachers to furnish any work which this Society keeps, for the children and youth under their care, and that they may feel assured that, by thus providing them they will secure the means of religious instruction *such as God is wont to bless to the conversion of souls*.

And we would only add that the *variety* is sufficient to meet the demands of all classes—children of tender age, youth in all relations, and adults of every variety of character; and all in every stage in Christian progress. It is

believed that on careful examination of the publications available to us, and which we sell at the low rates at which they are published by the several Societies, something may be found really *adapted to almost every case.*

#### *VI. Systematic Benevolence.*

It is found on examination that the Bible inculcates the duty of giving "according as the Lord has prospered" us, as definitely and fully as the duty of prayer or the use of any other means of grace. Yes, practical benevolence is recognized as a *means of grace*, and too careful attention cannot be given to its *claims* and *advantages*. That it *is* "more blessed to give than to receive." *God has declared.* That *efficiency in benevolence* is best secured by *systematic action* is almost self-evident. To aid in securing the prompt and faithful presentation of this subject, the "Divine Law of Beneficence" will be sent to all the Evangelical ministers in Canada, so far as their address can be ascertained. It is furnished through the American Tract Society, by a benevolent gentleman whose heart has been touched by the *Bible arguments* it presents, to ministers in the United States, as well as Canada, post paid. We hope every minister who receives this will examine it, and devise means for placing a copy in *every family* in his congregation; and we would respectfully suggest that all *preach* upon the subject, extracting as largely as desirable from the work itself, which is a Premium Essay prepared with much care, and proves eminently useful. It can be had for 5 cents per copy in paper or 10 cents bound, by application to the Depository, or at any Depository, or from any colporteur in the Provinces or States. The object is to promote *general systematic benevolence*, the "laying aside" for charitable and benevolent purposes a *certain portion* statedly "according as the Lord hath prospered."

Our object in promoting the circulation of this and similar works, as "Zaccheus, or the Scripture Plan of Benevolence," "The Mission of the Church," "Mammon" by Harris, and a 28 page tract, called "Systematic Benevolence," is not to provide for the wants of our own Institution alone. It is to awaken interest in the *whole work of benevolence*, at home and abroad. And it is one of the distinctive

excellencies of the Tract cause that it is *auxiliary* to Home and Foreign Missions, the Bible cause and benevolent and philanthropic efforts of every kind.

The operations of this Society are now conducted on the *benevolent* in distinction from the *commercial* principle. Its expenses are to be met entirely by the benevolent contributions of those who desire to aid in its work of love. The books and tracts are sold at the published prices of the different societies, from which they are procured and which aim to keep their prices at the lowest possible point, and it is estimated that the books sold will no more than pay their cost, as the small discounts allowed us will only cover expense of freight, exchange, postage, &c. It is intended to furnish all local Depositaries and dealers in the Province at the same rates we pay, and they in like manner, if they sell at catalogue prices, will only get their money back after paying expenses; while we have much pleasure in offering these advantages and encouragements to all parties, which we are able to do on account of our large shipments. All publications granted to the needy will therefore be required to be paid for by the benevolent. "*Blessed* is he that soweth beside all waters." Here then is the ground of our appeal. We are doing a benevolent work, and our means to prosecute it must come wholly from the practical benevolence of the friends of the cause of Christ. We hope, too, that not only our own wants will be supplied, but that soon we may be able to have a fund accruing from the hands of the liberal who "*devise liberal things*" in Canada, from which to make remittances to aid in spreading the knowledge of salvation by Christ in heathen and unevangelized countries. God grant that our practical benevolence may soon be so in proportion to our means that this may be done, while other home objects will meet a corresponding patronage.

"*That money* is best invested and will ultimately bring the richest harvest which is lent to the Lord. Even in this world none of our expenses bear reflection like those which were incurred to aid in advancing the kingdom of the Redeemer. The Lord calls upon his people to put him to the proof, by complying with all his requisitions. Bring ye the tithes into the storehouse, and prove me now herewith

saih the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room to receive it. The remark was once ventured that the time would come when Christians would fear to die rich, unless in good works. We firmly believe that it is at the door, that the hour is knocking at the heart of the wealthy Christian; and as he repairs to the Cross and surveys its unutterable mysteries of crucified love, and then looks over his treasures, he will put the affecting inquiry to his own heart, ‘ Shall I longer keep my hold of these to aggrandize myself and exalt my children to the high places of this world, or shall I lay them all down at the feet of Him who bought me with his blood?’ ”

It is a practical and honest question and demands an honest answer, by the light and under the responsibilities of the eternal world; and we trust that this question will be held up to the rich until it shall rest upon their hearts with the weight of Christian obligation. Where is the wealthy Christian who can consent to die worth tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars, and have six hundred millions of his fellow men perishing for the want of the Gospel? Who, that has means and loves the souls of men, had not rather far *execute his own will* and distribute according to the *Scripture* plan, to the necessities of those whom he cannot benefit when he is dead, *for they are dying in their sins?* And to *all* we would urge that, as a general law of Providence, poverty is not the fruit of a judicious liberality to the cause of Christ. According to His administration, they who give bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Zion has sent up her constant supplication, “ Thy Kingdom come,” and the Lord has given the response as clear as if he had written it on the face of the whole heaven, “ My Kingdom shall come, certainly and gloriously, but only by this mode: when my people plead for its advent with fervent desire, attended by faithful labors; when they show by their self-denying toils and holy conversation that they prize its coming better than thousands of silver and gold.” “ Herein is my Father glorified, *that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*” There is a daily beauty in the *consecrated life* of a consistent Christian, when the love and compassion of Christ beam from the eye

and modulate the voice, and prompt to sincere and kind efforts for the good of every being within the sphere of his influence, which the world cannot gainsay or resist.

Contrast with all this that legitimate though startling declaration, that "selfishness is the parent form and element of all sin," and, we might add, the source of all misery, and then let us turn to God's more excellent way, and obey his word, thereby showing that we love God.

### VII. *Efforts to Raise Funds.*

To save much of the expense of agency, and to provide for any deficiency in labor after the time and strength of the agent is judiciously expended, we earnestly request that each minister, in his place, will make an effort to raise funds annually for this Society, and as early as practicable for this year; and that *all who love the cause will help us*. To aid as much as possible in this indispensable branch of our work, we beg leave to suggest some modes of co-operation, and to state what facilities we are able to furnish in turn to those who would do good.

We recommend that in every congregation a Colporteur or Tract Association be formed, or a Committee appointed, who shall provide a book or books for the purpose, and obtain a subscription from *every member* of the congregation, without distinction of age, and that remittances be made as often as practicable to the Treasurer at Toronto.

Any individual, church or association, paying into the treasury of this Society \$200, or more, annually, may have the Quarterly Report of some Colporteur for their information and encouragement. This arrangement has proved very successful and satisfactory in the States. \$200 is about the average salary of Colporteurs—single men receiving \$150, and men of family requiring \$200, and \$250, as the case may be.

To encourage personal Christian effort the Society have arranged for Life Members to draw 150 pages of Tracts annually, if called for within the year. Life Directors to draw 3000 pages within the year. \$20 at one time, not specially appropriated to specific objects, may constitute a Life Member, \$30 additional, or \$50 at one time may constitute a Life Director. All annuities must be applied for

in person or by *written order* to the Depository at 65 and 67 Yonge Street, Toronto, or at such Depositories as may be designated hereafter. Colporteurs are not permitted to deliver annuities.—(See form of organization for *Colporteur Associations on last page of cover.*)

### VIII. *Individual Responsibility.*

The progress of this enterprise will be *in proportion to the means raised by its supporters and friends.* Thence the responsibility of the matter rests with those who have the means, and those in a position to influence others to action in its behalf. The most definite encouragement is furnished in the history of Colportage and Tract distribution *for all to co-operate* in prayer and effort and giving. The “mite” of the widow with her fervent prayers, the “child’s offering” with warm hearty aspirations, and the hundreds and thousands of the rich with the prayer of faith and word of counsel and encouragement are alike needed, and we trust God will give them to this cause. It is a work *for all.* Not one need say “It is not for me.” It comes to the aid of every laborer in every department of Christian enterprise.

The minister may greatly increase his usefulness by the use of those precious works which were written by men of the best intellect and the best heart; those for whom nature and grace did so much to fit them to bless their own and other generations to the end of time. And *every private Christian* may here find an auxiliary to personal effort for souls, often rendering effective the very labor which would fail of its end without such aid. Each one, then, may justly feel that this is *his work*, that it is *her work*, and that they have a responsibility both in the *use and support* of this instrumentality. When shall it be that all who love our Lord and Saviour will esteem it a *privilege* to use and promote means which their judgment approves, for the work of his kingdom? *It is a privilege.* In some of the ways specified, or in others more acceptable to the parties concerned, we trust many cheerful responses will come in to encourage our hearts and make the way clear before us to prosecute this work of the Lord efficiently, acceptably and without embarrassment.

In the foregoing address illustrations of the topics in course have been purposely omitted, in order to give place to the following condensed report of a "Colporteur Convention." A most interesting and profitable meeting in which matters of the greatest interest were brought out, and which can at best be but imperfectly reported.

UPPER CANADA TRACT SOCIETY, }  
*Toronto, October 10, 1864.* }

# R E P O R T

OF THE

# COLPORTEUR CONVENTION,

HELD IN TORONTO SEPT. 27th, 28th & 29th, 1854,

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE

UPPER CANADA TRACT SOCIETY.



## REPORT OF COLPORTEUR CONVENTION.

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On Wednesday, September 27, at 10 o'clock A.M., the Convention met in Temperance Hall, and was organized by the appointment of Rev. James Richardson, President of the Upper Canada Tract Society, as President of the Convention, and Rev. A. Wickson, A.M., of Toronto, and Mr. O. D. Grosvenor, of Rochester, Secretaries.

Convention was opened with reading of the Scriptures and prayer by the President, after which an hour was spent in devotional exercises as a fitting preparation for its deliberations. The following roll of members present was then made:—

Rev. JAMES RICHARDSON, *President, Toronto.*

Rev. A. WICKSON, A.M., }  
Mr. O. D. GROSVENOR,      } *Secretaries.*

Rev. A. M. STOWE, *Gen. Agent American Tract Society, Canandaigua.*

Rev. YATES HICKEY, *Gen. Agent and Supt. Colportage, Rochester.*

### COLPORTEURS.

ALEX. ANGUS, *London, Middlesex County, C. W.*

JAMES BATES, *Niagara, Lincoln, and Welland Counties.*

Rev. DANIEL BERNEY, *Ingersol, Oxford County.*

R. B. COOK, *St. George, Brant County.*

JOHN CONZELMAN, *German, Chippawa, Germans in Lincoln & vicinity.*

- LOUIS EALNER, *German Interpreter, Buffalo.*  
 JOSEPH LITTLE, *Warwick, Lambton County.*  
 GEO. LUNG, *Phillipsburgh, Perth and Huron, German population.*  
 P. M. MUNROE, *Dunnville, Haldimand County.*  
 J. E. MARTIN, *Simcoe.*  
 JESSE NUNN, *Greenville, Wentworth County.*  
 Rev. H. REES, *Doon, Waterloo and vicinity.*  
 ANDREW SCHMIDT, *Bridgeport, Waterloo & vicinity, German population.*  
 EZEKIEL SAMPSON, *Peterboro, Peterboro and Victoria.*  
 GEO. STEWART, *Cobourg, Durham.*  
 ROBERT SHARP, *Richmond Hill, York County.*  
 ROBERT TORNEY, *London.*  
 ROBERT SIMPSON, *Niagara.*

The object of the Convention was explained by the President, referring for particulars to Circulars issued. Sessions were held mornings and afternoons, and on Wednesday evening for devotional exercises and business, and on Thursday and Friday evenings public meetings—all of which were attended by clergymen of the City and vicinity and other interested parties. All were invited to take part in the meetings. Ladies were present at some of the business sessions, and the public meetings, though not largely attended, were of an encouraging character. None, it is believed, went from any of the meetings with other than feelings of satisfaction, and a greatly increased interest in the work of Colportage.

Each Colporteur and Candidate present gave a brief account of his early history, religious training, the manner in which he was led to this work, and related some incidents of interest connected with his labors. These exercises occupied much of the time, and in the course of their progress opportunities were afforded for free interchange of sentiment, and for the Superintendent to give valuable and much needed instructions in relation to all parts of the world.

After spending three days together in prayer and council and material instruction on points of practical interest, and all feeling that the presence and promised blessing of God had been experienced, and without one discordant element having been discovered to exist among the members of

the Convention belonging to eight different denominations. Each laborer returned to his field of toil better instructed in his duty, with more confidence in the work as God's work, with renewed zeal and energy and a confident trust in God that the work in Canada West, under the auspices of this Society, would find favor with the people and be extended rapidly till the whole land shall be supplied with faithful Colporteurs to carry messages of love and good will and the sowing truths of Christianity to the destitute in all places.

Many interesting facts and incidents were related which had not been known before by any present except to those who related them, and many others not before made public.

It was ascertained that six years ago Colportage was introduced into Canada West, in the following manner:—A German in New York who owned land in Waterloo, C. W., though an irreligious man himself, had discovered that where there was little or no regard for Christianity *property is less valuable* than where the Gospel is received and obeyed. Hence, in order to improve the value of his lands, located in the midst of a German settlement; where there were some forms of religion, but very little vital Christianity and consequently a very poor prospect of improvement, he applied to the Assistant Society for the Germans to aid him in improving the condition of his countrymen in Canada of whom there are now nearly 50,000. Handing the Rev. Mr. R. \$50, with a request to explore the field and see what could be done. The work was undertaken, and two Germans were then commissioned by the American Tract Society. One of these has labored very successfully in Perth, Huron, York, Lincoln, Welland and other counties, and now lives at Phillipsburg, Wilmot. The origin of the Niagara Tract Society, which has a Depository, sustains a Colporteur and is extending its usefulness, is traced to this man's labors by an interesting chain of Providence; and proofs of his usefulness are many on all the fields of his labor.

'The other German was at the end of five years earnestly solicited to receive ordination and become the pastor of three German churches organized in Waterloo counties by those who had been brought to Christ by the blessing of God on his humble labors and the truth circulated and read. He reluctantly yielded for the simple reason that no one else could be found for the place. Saying then, what he repeated to Mr. E. on his way

to this Convention, that so soon as a good Pastor could be found for those Churches, now numbering 120 members, he would return to the Colporteur work, take his box of books and tracts and go from house to house in his favorite department of labor.

His successor on the same field is a young man, who in Germany was a Romanist, on coming to America lived with an Universalist and embraced his views—was awakened at a funeral which Mr. S. attended, purchased books from him, and was brought to know and submit to Christ while reading the “Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul,” by Doddridge. His labors are attended with much success, and there is much reason to hope that these two men, together with a third recently employed and now living at Chippawa, may be instrumental in securing, by the blessing of God on their efforts to circulate his truth, a great and saving change in the social and spiritual condition of these thousands of Germans, among whom is found at present a great predominance of error in its most destructive forms.

The facts brought out by the aid of an interpreter, were calculated to deepen the conviction already existing in many minds that the German population in Canada *must be cared for*; and that this is the best if not the only agency at present available for their evangelization. A large proportion of the German Colporteurs in the States and two out of three in Canada trace their conversion to the blessing of God on the publications of the Tract Society, and hence their earnestness and zeal in promoting the work of Colportage. All the laborers, except the Germans, were born in some part of United Kingdom or Canada, and with one or two exceptions had passed through severe trial and affliction, and been brought to Christ in such circumstances as to mark their conversion as decided and thorough. Some had long embraced error, others had large experience in the working of mind in varied circumstances, and all seemed to feel that *necessity was laid upon them* to labor for Christ; and the privilege of engaging in these toils, with such facilities for successful effort was very dear.

Mr. A. after leaving Scotland, and passing some years in the West Indies, went to Halifax, and thence to London, C. W.; was instrumental in organizing Tract distribution, was recommended to the American Tract Society, and employed in Middlesex, has seen the way opening before him, interest increasing, sales of evangelical books easily effected where once

they were refused, and has introduced several new laborers. Mr. A. regretted not having fully reported incidents of great interest, not feeling at the time that it was important, but said "I have succeeded better as I proceed in my work by a more *simple* manner in pursuing it. I love it. I desire to continue in it. It has charms for me as no other work has. Its spirituality attracts my heart to it, and I could not give it up."

Rev. Mr. B. came from Ireland at 14 years of age. Went into the wilderness in Canada. A pious man visited his father's house, conversed with him and awakened interest. Convictions deepened at a meeting, truth was made effectual, and he embraced Christ as the only Saviour. Saw the books of the Tract Society some years since, and liked them. Heard of the work of Colportage, and desired to engage in it—"I leave no family without religious conversation. My views have changed much, the work has grown more and more in my affections as the result of a more practical knowledge of it."

Rev. H. R., commissioned by the Upper Canada Tract Society, was born in Wales. Has witnessed great changes—greatly increased desire for good books. Sabbath Schools organized and well sustained, and great interest in the work awakening. Is invited to labor in many parts. Hope more men will be employed, and doubt not the people will come forward and sustain the Society in its noble work. Has known several Romanists to be converted to the truth, and among them one who had studied for the priesthood, and read tracts, left by the doors. Won the attention and sincere consideration of two ladies, who were very light and trifling in their manner and conversation, by attention to the children and asking the mother if she would like to meet them in heaven.

A Mr. S., an old inhabitant of York County, had arranged in his mind a plan like Colportage and designed going out as a voluntary Colporteur but being prevented from that and hearing of their meeting, came to see and hear and offer his support to the enterprise. God had given him "means" and he could *help in that way* while he was prevented from engaging personally.

Mr. J. N., after various efforts to drive away the conviction that he should devote himself wholly to Christian labor, met a Colporteur, read the book of "Instructions," (a work setting forth the practical working of the

whole system of Colportage for the use of laborers and information of others) and resolved to engage if he could,—was received on trial, commenced permanent labor, last December, obliged to explain the work to all. Well received when the objects are understood. People need and generally desire to obtain the whole variety of our books."

Mr. J. B., born in London, England, and early removed to Canada. "Pike's Persuasive to early Piety," and Dr. Watt's sermon to young persons, were blessed to his conversion. He became Superintendent of a Sabbath School. Met Mr. C., a Colporteur, and also the Superintendent. Was commissioned. Saw fruits of German Colporteur's labor in the awakening of some, and in preparing the way for the work. Mr. B. expressed much satisfaction in the success which had attended his efforts to reach and benefit Romanists, citing many instances in which he had first read passages from the Bible, Books and Tracts, and then had been applied to for the same, and giving his opinion that *much may be done* for the social and spiritual benefit of these classes too generally regarded as inaccessible, thus proving again that Romanists are as easy of access as the same general class who make no profession whatever.

At Queenston a revival of Religion occurred last winter. Many books were sold, a Union Sabbath School organized and well sustained. Taverns closed and Grog Shops shut up by influence of the meetings and the Tracts, Books, and Bibles circulated. In one desolate house where the only seat discovered was a small box, was a poor family—no Books, no Bible: desired one, and "casting bread upon the water," one was given. People said it would be sold for Rum or destroyed, but on calling again found leaves turned down in many places and straws to mark different passages had been read much. Other incidents of similar character, and relating to various ages and circumstances. Thus he was encouraged to labor faithfully with all classes.

Mr. C. was born at Niagara—was advised to study for the ministry. Not thinking himself adapted to be a Minister, he felt constrained to enter upon *some* missionary labor. Went to attend the ordination of Rev. M. S., the German before referred to in this report, and was recommended for commission as a Colporteur. Has labored two years and desires to continue. He commenced on the Railway line—Romanist wanted a Bible. Mr. C. had only the Testament—"not the right kind, not the true one."

Asked if she believed in Christ ; said yes, but we must go to him through the Priest, Bishop, Cardinal, Pope and Virgin. Asked her why not go to Christ *direct*, as it is God and not man to whom we must go. Gave tracts. Saw her again, and she said she had been brought by that little book to consider and believe in Christ, and that she would purchase books at every opportunity.

Mr. L. was hopefully converted before leaving Ireland. "In the wilderness of Canada," away from means of grace—backslid. Was in this state for 7 years ; then read a Tract sent out from England "Do you love Jesus ?" "This went to my heart and I returned to my Lord, and resolved to spend much time in Tract distribution. I made my arrangements to give up business and, providentially, had my attention turned to the Colporteur work by an advertisement of the Upper Canada Tract Society. "I visited from house to house, amongst others, Roman Catholics who loved to hear me because I did not talk about the Virgin Mary, No ! I love talk about Christ. I am embarrassed by the *kindness* of the people, and find *myself* more and more interested, and interest extending."

The short time which the Convention were together, prevented the Colporteurs from going largely into details of their labor, and consequently the large fund of illustration with which most of them were prepared, was rendered unavailable for present use. It was the Superintendent's impression, however, that no company of laborers had been together who were more thoroughly engaged in the work or on an average better calculated to succeed in their respective fields; and more names were reported of persons who were anxious to share in these toils and self-denial for Christ's sake.

At the public meeting addresses were made by Colporteurs and Agents, and by the President and many of the Clergymen of the City, from only one of which we can make an extract, and this because it explains the position of this Society—a subject about which erroneous statements have been made in some public prints.

In the address it was stated, and with the distinct approval of the meeting, that the connection with the American Tract Society had all along been rather of a *business character* than that of affiliation ; that its publications were found excellent and cheap, and therefore this Society availed

itself of them ; that the valuable services of the Rev. Mr. Hickey, Agent at Rochester, had been requested and granted on general grounds only ; and that the Directors of the Upper Canada Tract Society decidedly disapproved of that practice which had been adopted in some instances of abstracting or changing passages of books on the subject of Slavery.

Every point taken in the foregoing addresses was fully sustained by the accounts given verbally by these men who are constantly in the field, especially all the "characteristics of Colportage" named, and the statements relating to the "Situation of Canada," and the formation of Sabbath Schools.

Books were sold to those possessing and reading no Religious books before. Destitution is everywhere found, and ready access obtained after full explanation of the matter and object of the work, and all gave a plain indication of the duty of Christians in Canada, to do with their might what they find it possible to do for the extension of Colportage.



